PROVISIONAL

E/1997/SR.36
28 July 1997

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Substantive session of 1997

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 36th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 21 July 1997 at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh)
(Vice-President)

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GE.97-63529 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Galuška (Czech Republic), Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

REPORTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES (agenda item 7) (continued) (E/1997/L.23 and Add.1)

(c) SOCIAL QUESTIONS (continued) (E/1997/15, 17 and Corr.1, 26-28, 30, 48, 53, 56, 64, A/52/183-E/1997/74, E/1997/103 and 104; E/1997/NGO/3)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to continue its consideration of agenda item 7 (c).

Ms. PEREZ-DUARTE y NOROÑO (Mexico) said that drug trafficking was a world problem seriously affecting the sovereignty and national security of States. Its magnitude made it essential for the international community to strengthen control measures in a holistic manner so as to cover not only cultivation, production and trafficking but also related activities such as money laundering and the reduction of demand. In that context, her Government attached great importance to the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly to be held on the subject in 1998. Since very little time was left to complete those preparations, it was essential to begin the process of analysing texts for possible adoption at the session, and her delegation invited all States to participate in the negotiations so as to reach satisfactory agreements of benefit to the whole international community. Her Government had submitted two proposals for texts and it thanked all those States which had already submitted their comments on those proposals and urged those which had not yet done so to present them as soon as possible.

Ms. KIRSCH (Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Union, which had followed very closely the work of the first session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs acting as the preparatory body for the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly, wished to reiterate its position that the special session should result in a reaffirmation of the political commitment of Governments to international drug control and a declaration of principles regarding demand reduction. The special session would also be an opportunity to address the growing problem of the manufacture of and trafficking in synthetic drugs and their precursors.

The Union wished to emphasize the importance of active participation in the preparatory work and in the special session itself by other interested parties, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society and

other organizations of the United Nations system. Moreover, the gender perspective should be integrated into both the preparatory process and the follow-up to the special session and special emphasis should be placed on fighting drug abuse by young people.

The Union had played and would continue to play an active role in the informal inter-sessional meetings, the results of which would be evaluated at the next session of the Commission acting as the preparatory body. The participation of Member States in those inter-sessional meetings, and in the second preparatory session, was essential to ensure the success of the special session.

Mr. ZHANG Yue (China) said that the special session of the General Assembly to be held in 1998, 10 years after the adoption of the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic, should result in the formulation of an Action Plan that would strengthen international cooperation and reflect the determination of the international community to wage the common war against drug trafficking and drug abuse. The Plan should be concrete and action-oriented and should lay out a strategy that could be put into effect in the years to come.

His Government attached great importance to measures to halt the increase in the illicit manufacture, trafficking and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants and their precursors, and called upon the international community to bear in mind the recommendations of the Expert Meeting on Amphetamine-type Stimulants, held at Shanghai in 1996.

Governments should provide the necessary data in a timely manner. Adequate funding would be needed for the campaign and the developed countries, in particular, should provide financial support. The Council should approve the various recommendations and decisions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

Ms. RODRIGUEZ de FANKHAUSER (Observer for Guatemala) said that her delegation was particularly interested in the draft resolution entitled "Contribution to the Strengthening of the Global Programme of Action: Anti-drug Strategy in the Americas", supporting as it did the holistic approach aimed at reducing both demand and supply, and it had become a sponsor of the resolution in the Commission. However, the name of Guatemala had been omitted from the list of sponsors in the Commission's report (E/1997/28, para. 120), and she requested that it be inserted.

The PRESIDENT said that her request had been noted and that the necessary action would be taken.

Mr. GYGER (Observer for Switzerland) said that, in terms of social development, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and the 1995 World Summit for Social Development had been somewhat disappointing. Although it was generally agreed that social development was one of the three components of sustainable development, it had proved very difficult to make any progress in the matter and put into effect the commitments made at the Rio and Copenhagen conferences.

In its resolution 35/2, the Commission for Social Development had adopted certain agreed conclusions for transmission to the Council. Paragraph 15 of that resolution was fundamental. It made it clear that chief responsibility for improving the quality of employment rested with Governments, which should safeguard and promote respect for the fundamental rights of workers contained in the seven basic conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The Director-General of ILO had proposed the adoption of a solemn declaration on universal respect for those fundamental workers' rights. The solemn declaration should emphasize that the States members of ILO undertook to implement and respect the fundamental rights of workers whether or not they had ratified the seven basic conventions.

All States were interested in improving and strengthening their economic competitiveness at a time of rapid globalization. The conditions for the production of goods and services constituted one of the factors determining the comparative advantage of States on the world market. While his delegation had always argued that the comparative advantage of the developing countries, linked to low wages and a relatively low standard of social welfare, was legitimate, respect for fundamental labour standards did not impair that comparative advantage. Globalization of the economy should be accompanied by respect for the fundamental rights of workers, one of the foundations of sustainable development.

Mr. TARABRIN (Russian Federation) stressed the importance of expanding international cooperation in the field of narcotics control. Drug

abuse was one of the world's most serious social problems, endangering the lives of millions of people, hindering economic growth and disrupting the political stability of many States.

The United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) should focus on priority issues such as the strengthening of regional and global controls on the trafficking of drugs, psychotropic substances and (chemical) precursors.

His delegation welcomed the outcome of the fortieth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (E/1997/28), particularly the decisions concerning the misuse of amphetamine-type substances, the adoption of national drug-control legislation and demand reduction.

All countries should be urged to implement the Global Programme of Action. Cooperation between UNDCP and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice must be enhanced, but there was no justification for merging the Commission on Narcotic Drugs with the latter Commission; nor should the Commission be made open-ended.

His delegation strongly disapproved of the legalization of the non-medical use of narcotic drugs, which could not but undermine the international drug control system. Heroine and methadone should not be used to treat drug addicts, even on an experimental basis.

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs was the appropriate preparatory body for the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly on the topic of narcotic drugs. His delegation, which would continue to participate actively in those preparations, considered that the special session should devise a concrete programme of action on priority issues for international cooperation for the coming decade.

He looked forward to a continuation of practical bilateral cooperation with UNDCP and the donor countries in the follow-up to the joint conference that had been held in Moscow in April 1997.

Ms. KOVALSKA (Observer for Ukraine) said that her Government had participated very actively from the outset in preparing the 1996 regional conference on problems of refugees and displaced persons in the CIS countries. Her delegation had thus been surprised to hear the statement by the

Deputy United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees that, unless States gave it sufficient priority, the Programme of Action adopted by that conference would not be realized.

Her Government had already taken a series of important steps over the past year in the major areas of activity covered by the Programme. It had actively supported a joint operational strategy devised by UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and had been very satisfied with the level of cooperation with those two agencies, although the scope of their operations in Ukraine fell far short of the real needs.

Despite Ukraine's unilateral efforts, the problems remained as serious as they had been at the time of the 1996 conference, particularly with regard to preventive measures. The Ukrainian authorities were deeply disappointed by the level of international financing of the programmes being carried out by UNHCR and IOM in Ukraine, as well as by the virtual absence of any response to appeals at the bilateral level. In the circumstances, it would seem appropriate for the priorities set by UNHCR and IOM to be redefined and for their programmes to be revised downwards.

Mr. BENITEZ (Argentina) said that his Government was determined to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking through maximum cooperation at the multilateral and bilateral level. It remained firmly opposed to the legalization of the use of psychotropic and narcotic substances.

Its national policy laid stress on preventive action through education and the implementation of various projects and programmes relating to the social and economic circumstances of drug users, the incorporation into domestic legislation of the Anti-drug Strategy for the Americas; and international cooperation. Since drug-related criminal activities did not respect frontiers, legislation had been adopted and updated to prohibit and penalize illicit trafficking in narcotic and psychotropic substances, as a joint governmental committee had been established to study the control of chemical precursors, and radar facilities had been developed to locate any aircraft entering the national airspace for trafficking purposes.

At the international level, his Government had supported the resolutions adopted by the relevant bodies of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations, including the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic. It was engaged in close bilateral cooperation with a number of others and had

launched a domestic offensive against money laundering. It supported the holding of the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly on the subject.

Mr. STREJCZEK (Poland) said that the rise in transnational organized crime demanded an adequate international response. His delegation thus welcomed the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme as a useful instrument for strengthening international cooperation and action in that area and hoped that the restructuring of the United Nations machinery would strengthen the Programme further and also the closely related drug control programme.

At the sixth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, much attention had been paid to the question of elaborating a United Nations framework convention against organized transnational crime, on the basis of a draft submitted by his delegation providing for a series of measures to be undertaken by individual Governments and internationally. The discussion had shown wide support for such a convention and many participants had agreed with the thrust of the proposed text, despite some reservations with regard to issues such as extradition and the definition of organized crime, problems which were by no means unsurmountable.

Mr. WAHID (Sudan), having thanked the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner (UNHCR) for its activities on behalf of Eritrean and Ethiopian refugees in his country, said that, as indicated in paragraph 92 of the report (E/1997/17), certain difficulties had been encountered in respect of the voluntary repatriation of Eritrean refugees. Since the Eritrean authorities had refused to participate in tripartite technical discussions, his Government had been obliged to make bilateral arrangements with UNHCR.

Paragraph 98 of the report referred to discussions at a summit meeting of the States members of the Intergovernmental Authority of Development (IGAD), aimed at preventing further displacement of population in the region. Progress in that direction would require the countries concerned to coordinate their plans in an atmosphere of clear understanding. A resolution recently adopted by a Committee of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) had called for the convening of a ministerial meeting to discuss the problem of refugees in Africa with the countries and international organizations concerned with a view to finding a permanent solution. Such a meeting would provide an

opportunity to discuss the question of refugees in the Sudan with the relevant OAU members and take the necessary political decisions on the matter.

Ms. CASSAM (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that the problem of drug trafficking and drug abuse was seriously destabilizing the economies of many countries and retarding human development. Providing information on the causes and consequences of drug abuse, though necessary, was not enough. Such information had to be complemented by educational messages, starting very early in a child's formative years. The UNESCO anti-drug programme placed special emphasis on preventive education while at the same time addressing the root socio-cultural causes of the drug problem.

In January 1997, UNESCO and the European Commission had launched the second phase of their Prevention, Education, Drugs - Project (PEDDRO), which was a worldwide network of information in the field of drug-abuse prevention through education. The project also provided for an exchange of ideas and debate among professionals and experts, on new trends in the field of substance abuse and the different methods used to protect young children through drug-prevention education.

UNESCO was currently producing international newsletters and educational material on the subject in a number of languages and was assisting several countries to develop national programmes.

Ms. BRANDSTRUP (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that she had intended to make a statement on behalf of FAO on the subject of "Advancement of women" but, in the interest of saving time, she would arrange for copies of the statement to be distributed to delegations.

Mr. YOSHIDA (World Health Organization (WHO)) said that, in developing its strategies against drug abuse, WHO wished to ensure that the health and social consequences of substance abuse were given full consideration in public health agendas. It was concerned with all psychoactive substances, regardless of their legal status, and promoted measures such as primary prevention, health-risk management, treatment and regulatory control.

WHO welcomed the decision to convene a special session of the General Assembly in June 1998 to discuss the problem. Although the

international drug-control treaties provided mechanisms for cooperation and control of the supply, import and export of internationally controlled drugs, it was also necessary to address the demand for illicit drugs and related health and social problems. It was thus encouraging that Member States had expressed a strong interest in the adoption at the special session of a declaration on the guiding principles of demand reduction.

Ms. PINTAT (Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)) said parliaments were key actors in the implementation of the government commitments entered into at such major international conferences as the Fourth World Conference on Women. As the institutional representatives of civil society, parliaments were also the forums for the resolution of social tensions.

The appearance of women in the public arena had posed major challenges and provoked profound social changes, but the world of politics had remained a solid bastion of male domination and democracy could not be said to be complete when women were little involved in political life, decision-making, and the elaboration of laws and national budgets. Moreover, the exclusion of women from politics represented an immense waste of human resources and it was time to develop a new social contract based on partnership between the two sexes.

Political will was essential for ensuring such a partnership. While IPU did not have the power to guarantee such political will at the national level, it had established a partnership monitoring group to ensure the protection of the interests of both genders in the political sphere. One of the group's main tasks was to carry out in-depth consultation on the possibility of instituting an innovative rule which would deprive a delegation attending meetings of the Union of the right to two votes if it did not include at least one woman.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on the proposals and recommendations in the reports of the functional commissions, under agenda item 7 (c).

Proposals contained in the report of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/1997/27)

The PRESIDENT said that he had received a request for a roll-call vote on draft resolution I, entitled "Palestinian women", which had been adopted in the Commission by a recorded vote (38-1-3).

Mr. WINNICK (United States), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that his delegation had hoped that the Commission would have followed the wide course of action set in motion at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, which had refrained from targeting specific national or regional conflicts and focused instead on gender-specific issues.

The draft resolution was unacceptable because it addressed permanent status issues that were the subject of direct negotiations between the parties concerned in the Middle East Peace Process. The language was one-sided and did not advance the status or well-being of women in society.

The vote was taken by roll-call.

South Africa, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.

In favour: Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Czech Republic, Djibouti, El Salvador, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Iceland, India, Japan, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Mozambique, Netherlands, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Against: United States of America.

Abstaining: None.

Draft resolution I was adopted by 44 votes to 1*.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on draft resolution II, entitled "Agreed conclusions on the critical areas of concern".

Draft resolution II was adopted.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on draft decision I, entitled "Renewal of the mandate of the Open-ended Working Group on the Elaboration of a Draft Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women", draft decision II,

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* The delegation of Jamaica subsequently informed the Council that, had it been present during the voting, it would have voted in favour of the draft resolution.

entitled "Functional Commissions", and draft decision III, entitled "Report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its forty-first session and provisional agenda and documentation for the forty-second session of the Commission", respectively.

Draft decisions I, II and III were adopted .

Proposals contained in the report of the Commission for Social Development (E/1997/26)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on draft resolution I, entitled "International Year of Older Persons: towards a society for all ages", draft resolution II, entitled "Equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities", draft resolution III, entitled "Children with disabilities", and draft resolution V, entitled "Follow-up to the International Year of the Family".

Draft resolutions I, II, III and V were adopted .

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should postpone its consideration of draft resolution IV, entitled "Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, including a World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth", until it had been addressed by the Secretary of State for Youth of Portugal.

It was so decided .

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on the draft decision entitled "Report of the Commission for Social Development on its thirty-fifth session and provisional agenda and documentation for the thirty-sixth session of the Commission".

The draft decision was adopted .

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to Commission decision 35/101, entitled "Nomination of members of the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development". He took it that the Council wished to confirm the candidates nominated in that decision for membership in the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

It was so decided .

Recommendations and proposals contained in the report of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (E/1997/30)

The Council endorsed the five recommendations contained in Chapter I, section A, of the Commission's report for submission to the General Assembly for appropriate action.

The Council adopted the 10 draft resolutions contained in Chapter I, section B, of the Commission's report.

The Council adopted the draft decision entitled "Report of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on its sixth session, provisional agenda and documentation for its seventh session and organization of work and themes for its future sessions".

Proposals contained in the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on its fortieth session (E/1997/28)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on draft resolution I entitled "Review of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme: strengthening the United Nations machinery for international drug control within the scope of the existing international drug control treaties and in accordance with the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations".

Mr. WINNICK (United States) said that, although his delegation had expressed its reservations concerning that draft resolution within the Commission, it had not broken with the consensus approval at that time, and he noted that the delegation of Sweden, the primary sponsor, had been open and receptive to his delegation's continuing concerns.

Although the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) was already an effective anti-drug operation and partner in addressing the drug threat throughout the world, the draft resolution nevertheless required the formation of an ad hoc expert group to meet several times, specifically in order to review the United Nations drug control machinery. UNDCP, while endeavouring to maintain its international operations, was also charged with preparing for the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly.

Since the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had considered the issue, the Secretary-General had selected a new Executive Director of UNDCP and had proposed reform initiatives affecting the United Nations Office at Vienna. Because of the likelihood of overlap between the reform initiatives of the Secretary-General, the aspirations of the new Executive Director, and the

draft resolution under discussion, his delegation believed that these elements should be well considered and weighed prior to beginning any implementation of that initiative. Indeed, implementation should proceed at the most appropriate time in the light of the reforms affecting United Nations anti-narcotics activities, after all the voluntary resources required were pledged and provided, and with due allowance for the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly.

Draft resolution I was adopted.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on draft resolution II, entitled "Demand for and supply of opiates for medical and scientific needs", and draft resolution III, entitled "Baku Accord on Regional Cooperation against Illicit Cultivation, Production, Trafficking, Distribution and Consumption of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and their Precursors".

Draft resolutions II and III were adopted.

The PRESIDENT said, with respect to draft resolution IV entitled "Working languages of the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East", that the Council might wish to postpone consideration of that draft resolution pending receipt of further information from the Secretariat on the financial implications it involved.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on draft resolution V entitled "Contribution to the Strengthening of the Global Programme of Action: Anti-Drug Strategy in the Americas".

Mr. AMAT FORES (Cuba) said that, while his delegation supported the Global Programme of Action and drug-control efforts at both the regional and international levels, the Anti-Drug Strategy in the Americas discriminated against Cuba, which was not a member of the Organization of American States (OAS). His country was therefore excluded on the basis of political considerations, although it was a victim of drug trafficking, and had made great efforts to tackle such illegal activities.

Draft resolution V was adopted.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on draft resolution VI entitled "Implementation of Comprehensive Measures to Counter the Illicit Manufacture, Trafficking and Abuse of Amphetamine-Type Stimulants and their Precursors".

Draft resolution VI was adopted.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on draft decisions I to V.

Draft decisions I to V were adopted.

Proposals contained in the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs acting as the preparatory body for the special session of the General Assembly devoted to the fight against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and related activities on its first session (E/1997/48)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on the two draft decisions (I and II) contained in that report.

Draft decisions I and II were adopted.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.